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A LETTER FROM A GENTLEMAN in Town, TO His FRIEND in the Country, Relating to the ROYAL INFIRMARY OF *EDINBURGH.*

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MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM

Edinburgh, December 1, 1738.

SIR,

I Give you this Trouble, to acquit myſelf of the Promiſe you brought me under, when I left you in my Way hither: If I am too particular in the Account I am to give you of the ROYAL INFIRMARY, the Commands you laid upon me, to enter into the minuteſt Things about it, will, I hope, apologize for me.

AN Hoſpital for entertaining and curing diſeaſed Poor here has been much wanted, and long wiſhed for; the Royal College of Phyſicians have the Honour of ſetting it on Foot, and nurſing it, to the Bearing it is brought to: They laid hold on a favourable Opportunity about thirteen Years ago, for procuring Subſcriptions for a Stock to carry it on, and ſo far ſucceeded, that a Houſe,

ſuited to their firſt Capital of *L.* 2000, was opened in the Year 1729, for the entertaining eight or nine Patients at a time. The Phyſicians and Surgeons have attended it, in their Turns, ever ſince *gratis*; and ſo far GOD has bleſſed their Endeavours, that from that little Houſe, in the courſe of nine Years that it has ſubſiſted, ſeveral hundreds have come out ſo well cured, as to be able to go about their ordinary Affairs with Comfort; and ſcarce any have died under their Hand.

PEOPLE have been ſo well pleaſed with this Undertaking, that their Capital is encreaſed to about *L.* 5000 *Sterling*; the Contributers are erected into a Corporation, with perpetual Succeſſion, by his Majeſty's Royal Charter, dated 25th *Auguſt* 1736, by the Name of the ROYAL INFIRMARY OF EDINBURGH; and, I am told, they are in hope of obtaining a conſiderable Addition to their Capital, from his Majeſty's moſt gracious Bounty.

BY the Royal Charter, the Infirmary is put under the Care of twenty Managers, *viz.* the Lord Provoſt of *Edinburgh* for the time, and, in his Abſence the Dean of Guild; the Preſident of the Royal College of Phyſicians, for the time, and, in his Abſence the Vice-Preſident; the Deacon-Conveener of the Trades of *Edinburgh* for the time; four out of the Royal College of Phyſicians, whereof two of the Profeſſors of Medicine in the Univerſity, when there are ſuch at the time; the Profeſſor of Anatomy, if there be ſuch at the time; and two of the Corporation of Surgeons, or three of the ſaid Corporation, when there is no Profeſſor of Anatomy; one of the Senators of the College of Juſtice; one of the Faculty of Advocates; one of the Society of Clerks to the Signet; one of the Miniſters of the Goſpel in *Edinburgh*, and ſix others out of the Number of Contributers to the Infirmary under the Controul of the Corporation.

THE Managers for the preſent Year, are, the Lord Provoſt of *Edinburgh*, the Deacon Conveener of *Edinburgh*, the Lord Preſident of the Seſſion, Lord *Minto*, Lord *Elchies*, Lord Advocate, Mr.

Mr. *James Graham* of *Airth*, Mr. *Alexander Macmillan* Writer to the Signet, Commiſſioner *George Drummond*, Dr. *Robert Lowis*, Dr. *John Clark*, Dr. *John Learmont*, Dr. *Andrew St. Clair*, Dr. *John Rutherford*, Mr. *Peter Wedderburn* Advocate, Mr. *Patrick Cuming* Miniſter of the Goſpel in *Edinburgh*, *Alexander Monro* Profeſſor of Anatomy, Mr. *Francis Congalton*, and Mr. *George Cuningham* Chirurgeons, and Mr. *Robert Hepburn* lately dead.

THIS Situation of their Affairs, and the Application of Patients to them in much greater Number than their preſent Houſe can receive, determined the Managers to begin to build a convenient Houſe: They, with great Judgment, made choice of, and purchaſed a Piece of Ground, much the beſt ſituated for that Purpoſe, of any Spot within the Walls of the City. The Plan they have agreed upon conſiſts of a Body of a Houſe of 206 Foot long from Eaſt to Weſt, fronting North, and of two Wings extending North, 70 Foot long each from the Body.

IT is to be three full Story high, of 11 Foot each from Floor to Floor, and the fourth an Attick Story; the Walls of which being 8 Foot high to the Eaſing of the Roof, and the Beds 2½ Foot removed from the Wall, will make the Height of that Story the ſame with the under ones.

THE whole Houſe is to be 25 Foot broad within the Walls, except 54 Foot in the Center, which is to be 36 Foot within the Walls, in order to have a convenient Operation-Room, where from 200 to 300 Students and Apprentices may conveniently ſee any Operation performed, without diſturbing thoſe who perform it.

THE Ground Story is to be diſpoſed into the neceſſary Offices for the Service of the Houſe, and into vaulted Cells for the Reception of 12 Lunaticks, or a greater Number if it is found neceſſary.

THE other three Stories are very conveniently laid out for accommodating the Patients; one Patient only is to lie in a Bed, and

to

to have a little retiring Place at the Head of it; and the Managers, who are already ſetting about providing Sheets, Blankets, and other neceſſary Furniture, are reſolved in the Cleanlineſs of every Part of their Houſe, to endeavour as far as they can, to equal at leaſt any Hoſpital of that kind in *Europe*.

EACH of the three Stories in the Body of the Houſe, conſiſts of two Galleries of 82 Feet in length, divided from one another by two Gavels; between which, the Operation-Room, the Hall for the Managers, the Secretary and Accomptant's Offices, the Apothecary's Shop, and Treaſurer's Office are to be placed. Each Gallery, having a Chimney at each End, contains 20 Beds, ſo diſpoſed, that the drawing a Curtain at the Foot of every Bed, forms a kind of Room of the Space of two Beds, fronting one another, and the Area between them of 5 Foot by 8, with a large Window. The Area left in the middle of the Gallery between the two Rows of Beds, will be about 9 or 10 Foot broad; and, in each, there are four ſmall Fire-rooms for Patients who require Warmneſs. The Wings, having a Stair-caſe taken off their Length, to ſerve for Acceſs to them, and that End of the Body of the Houſe they are joined to, have therefore only 50 Foot of their length left to accomodate 8 Beds on a Floor in the open Gallery, and 4 in the Corners, which is 12 in each Story. Thus the whole Houſe will contain 216 Beds, whereof 48 in little Fire-rooms.

WHEN the Houſe is finiſhed, 'tis propoſed that the Men ſhall be accommodated ſeparately by themſelves, and the Women by themſelves.

THE Building, ſo far as it is carried on, is indeed one the moſt ſolid ever my Eyes beheld. It has no hewn Work, except the Corners, a Baſe and Belt, and the Doors and Windows: Nor is it to have any Ornament, but in the Front of the 54 Foot in the Centre, as this is to be more properly a College than an Hoſpital. And as the Houſe, in time, muſt prove the Glory of this Country, the Contributors, who gave the greateſt Donations to the Building,

ſignified

ſignified to the Managers, that the ornamenting it properly would be agreeable to them, and they gave into it: But as Mr. *William Adams* Architect, has cauſed a Plate of it to be engraved, which will be ſold in all the Bookſellers Shops in Town, I'll ſend it you, rather than detain you longer with a Deſcription of the Building.

THE Managers propoſe to receive into this Houſe every Patient that offers, from whatever Place or Country they come, if, after conſidering the Patient's Caſe, the Phyſicians and Surgeons attending judge there is any Ground to hope their Diſeaſe may be cured. They have it particularly in view, to appropriate a ſufficient Number of Beds for Family-Servants who may fall ſick; and as the Houſe will accommodate ſo great Number of Patients, ſome of which will be daily going out, I find every body thinks it ſcarce poſſible the Houſe can ever be without a ſufficient Number of empty Beds to accommodate all who offer.

THE whole Members of the Royal College of Phyſicians, have ſubjected themſelves to attend the Patients, and ſo have the whole Corporation of Chirurgeons, who likewiſe give the Medicines *gratis*, which does great Honour to both theſe Societies: So that I believe I may aſſure you with Truth, no one Hoſpital in *Europe* will be better attended, ---- to ſay no more.

SO noble and pious an Undertaking, when it is brought to the deſigned Perfection, will give a rational Proſpect, that in that Houſe there may be 1000 Patients cured every Year; which muſt afford great Pleaſure to every Chriſtian. And it has yet another Advantage of vaſt Conſequence to Mankind, as all Students, either in Phyſick or Surgery, for a very ſmall Honorary to be applied towards the Expence of the Houſe, will be admitted not only to attend the Phyſicians and Chirurgeons in their Viſits, to ſee their Preſcriptions, to excerpt from a fair Regiſter, which is kept in the Houſe, of every Patient's Caſe and Cure, all the Caſes they think worth their Notice; but will alſo have all the Advantages of a regular Education by the Colleges, in all the different Branches

of Phyſick. It is morally impoſſible that any one Student, poſſeſſed of common Senſe, who has got that Education, and minded his Buſineſs, can be an Ignorant, when he commences Maſter in any of theſe Profeſſions. From this, ſurely, even the Rich muſt reap Benefit; and as this Country ſends Numbers of ſuch Students abroad, this Education muſt do them great Service. It muſt do Honour to our Country, which muſt alſo reap greater conſequential Advantages from this Hoſpital, than I can pretend to calculate, by the Return of the Gentlemen of theſe Profeſſions to it in their old Age, with the Fortunes they have acquired abroad with Reputation.

By this Time, I am ſure, you are in Pain leſt the Undertaking be long ere it be brought to bear, ſince you know that the Managers are tied up by their Patent from employing one Shilling of their Capital to carry on the Building. You are concluding that this Country not having Riches equal to ſome others, we cannot contribute any thing conſiderable to it; and as the Fabrick muſt coſt a very great Sum, the ſeeing it brought any great Length is a Happineſs you are afraid you will not have, and perhaps even doubt if ſucceeding Ages will.

I am told the Managers were of the ſame Opinion when they came to the Reſolution to begin the Building, and therefore thought it was their Duty to lay a Plan which might be executed piecemeal, and none of them imagined that even the next Age would ſee it finiſhed.

What they have laid the Foundation of this Summer is 82 Foot long, of the Body of the Houſe within the Walls, which will accommodate 72 Patients, and the Stair-caſe of the Wing adjoining to it: The Eſtimate of this alone, which is not much above one Fourth of the Plan, amounts to about 1600 *L. Sterling*.

They applied to the General Aſſembly at their laſt Meeting, for a voluntary Collection over the Kingdom, for building the Houſe,

Houſe, who very readily granted their Act and Recommendation; but I am ſorry to ſay it, that, without the Preſbytery of *Edinburgh*, not a great many Pariſhes have complied with the Act. Sure never was Money demanded for a better Purpoſe. I therefore hope they'll yet think of it, and ſend up their Collections to the Managers, to encourage them to go on with what they have with ſo honeſt a Spirit begun.

My Lady *Orbiſton*, I find, has great Merit with them; ſhe has given an Aſſembly for the Benefit of the Infirmary almoſt every Year ſince its Erection; and moſt generouſly defrays the Expence of the Houſe that Night out of her own Pocket.

Many private People, I am told, have contributed to it, and ſome of them very liberally, and ſo have moſt of the Societies in Town, ſuch as the Faculty of Advocates, the Writers to the Signet, the Royal College of Phyſicians, and ſeveral of the Corporations of the Town and Suburbs. The Managers have got Quarry Leave free for Stone and Lime; they have alſo got Preſents of Timber, Slates, *&c.* in Quantities, for the Building.

MARY's Chapel have, of all the Societies in Town, diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the moſt particular Manner. Their preſent Deacons offered their own Service to the Building very handſomely, and, in Name of the Corporation, gave up all the Maſter's Profit of the Wages of the Journeymen employed about it. Many of the Members have ſubſcribed for Compliments of Work, ſuch as, the Wrights to furniſh Windows, the Glaziers to glaze them, the Slaters to lay on the Slates, all *gratis*, *&c.* Some of the Managers tell me, they aſcribe their Succeſs in their Undertaking in a great Meaſure to the Frankneſs and Generoſity of the Members of that Corporation, which I think very much to the Honour of it, and calls on every Lover of his Country to give them Encouragement.

If the Maſters of that Corporation have ſhow'd great Heartineſs in promoting this uſeful Undertaking, the Journeymen are

not

not behind with them: They who have been employed about it ſince it began, upon the diſcontinuing the Building till Winter is over, gave each of them eight Days hewing *gratis*; and as the Managers employ the Winter to prepare the Materials for haſtening the Work forward in the Summer, theſe honeſt Men are each of them through the Winter to give two Days Work every Week *gratis*; and Numbers of Journeymen Maſons, who have not been employ'd in the Building, come and work in the Lodge *gratis* too.

When the Building requires Wright Work, the Managers are well aſſured they will get much of it wrought *gratis*, by the Journeymen Wrights in and about the Town.

The Farmers about the Town, with ſurpriſing Chearfulneſs, aſſiſt with free Carriages to the Building, which is a very conſiderable Article. Their Language to the Managers, when they applied to them, was, *It will be your own Fault if you pay a Farthing for Carriages; we'll aſſiſt you, Year after Year, till the Work is compleated.*

The *Leith* Carters deſerve alſo to be mentioned here with Gratitude. When the Farmers cannot ſpare their Carriages *gratis*, the Carters generouſly accept of eight Pence from the Infirmary for the Carriage, for which they get twelve Pence from the Merchants.

In ſhort, never was any Undertaking more univerſally approved, People of all Ranks ſpeak of it with Pleaſure, and ſeem to vye with one another who ſhall promote it moſt, and wiſh with Earneſtneſs to ſee it compleated.

The Managers are employing themſelves with great Diligence to have Stone, Lime, Sand and Timber, got together in abundance for the Summer's Work; and if they can get Money, it is not doubted but they will not only have the Roof upon that Part of the Houſe which is founded, but will alſo make ſome conſiderable

able Progreſs in the Operation Room next Summer, ſo as to have both ready, the one for receiving in 72 Patients, and the other for Inſtruction of the Students by the End of the Year 1740.

I imagine now you are ſolicitous to know what Proſpect they have to get in Money enough to go on with the Work next Summer; as to which be pleaſed to know,

THAT this Year they collected ſome more than has defrayed all their Charges; and their Proſpects for getting Money to go on with their Work next Year are,

A voluntary Collection at the Church-doors within this Preſbytery on the third Sabbath of this Month of *December*, and one at the Epiſcopal Meeting-houſes, who, in ſeveral Collections they have already made, have been very liberal in this Reſpect. An Aſſembly from my Lady *Orbiſton*. The Faculty of Advocates their Collection. A Conſort from the Gentlemen of the Muſick Society. A Collection from the honourable Society of free and accepted Maſons, who take a hearty and a moſt commendable Part in promoting this good Work; and from ſeveral other Societies.

ALL theſe, it is true, will come very far ſhort of the Sum that is neceſſary, but as People begin to ſee in a ſtrong Light, how much it is the Duty of every Member of Society, who has any Feeling of the Miſeries of the Diſtreſt; of every Lover of his Country, who wiſhes its Proſperity; and yet far more of every Chriſtian, to contribute according to their Ability to the forwarding this great and good Work, the Managers don't ſeem to be under any Apprehenſions of want of Money; their Expectations have been ſo much outdone this Year, that they truſt Providence for providing the needful Supplies for defraying the next Year's Charge, and I would willingly hope they will not be diſappointed, for ſeveral private Perſons have already contributed handſomely to it, and I know others who are reſolved to follow their good Example.

It is indeed ſurpriſing, that any Body who have any Money to ſpare can be eaſy in their own Minds while they don't aſſiſt to carry on this good Work. I cannot help thinking that it is the Duty of every good Man to view it in this Light. "The detain-
"ing even my ſmall Mite from it will in part be a Stop to the
"Finiſhing of the Work, and, till it is finiſhed, nine diſtreſſed
"People at a Time can only be taken care of, becauſe that is all
"that the preſent Houſe can take in; whereas, how ſoon this
"Part of the Building is fitted up, *ſeventy two* can be taken in;
"and therefore I am chargeable with a Part of the Guilt of their
"being unable to go on conſtantly, to take care of 63 diſeaſed
"Perſons more than they do at preſent. I am, *&c.*

PHILANTHROPOS.

Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the Poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of Trouble. The Lord will preſerve him, and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon the Earth; and thou wilt not deliver him into the Will of his Enemies. The Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the Bed of languiſhing; thou wilt make all his Bed in his Sickneſs.

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM

PSAL. xli. 1, 2, 3.

O Deus! humanâ qui tot ſub imagine ſortes,
Pro nobis, qui tot tuleras, tantoſque dolores:
Ut tua diviſæ coëant in fœdera gentes,
Et ducis exemplo, miſeris ſuccurrere diſcant:
O faveas cœptis, noſtriſque laboribus adſis,
Impellaſque *tui* memores, meminiſſe *tuorum*.